

Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editor)

Dear Terry, It's encouraging to know that there are those who preach truth in the days of watering down the truth of God's holy word. A special thank you for the article on 'Azusa St - What Really Happened'. Please keep up the good work until our Lord comes for us...

(C.M, Qld)

Terry, I have been receiving the 'Diakrisis' newsletter by hardcopy mail for many years now. It would be more economical for you to send it by e-mail. Thank you for your ministry to so many of the saints and to those who are searching and your stating God's word faithfully to those who are even antagonistic or ambivalent.

(P.H., Vict)

Praise/Prayer Points

- Praise the Lord for a wide distribution of our 'Eternal Questions' booklet to non Christians. We have some evangelists currently using this book. Pray for understanding of the Gospel in this booklet and souls to be won.
- Praise the Lord for recent baptisms and new families in Hervey Bay Bible Church.

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'But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern [diakrisis] both good and evil', (Heb.5:14)

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The editor may not necessarily agree with all the views expressed by subscribers in this newsletter.

We welcome comments or items contributed by readers. Unless otherwise requested, these may be included in following newsletters at the discretion of the editor.

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Move Along...No 'religion' to See Here.....

Although over time we have used various media outlets in an attempt to broadcast the message of the Gospel and on occasions advertised church events in local newspapers, we have learned some painful lessons in doing so. During interviews with journalists, our remarks have been misquoted, taken out of context, or simply ignored. More than once our written submissions for Christmas and Easter advertisements have had Gospel truths deleted and then explained away as a 'lack of space' being available.

The media tells you what they want you to hear, not always what is the truth. Journalism and reporting is often biased to agree with the mood of post modernism which often is a sickly sentimentalism that does not want to offend.

When journalists and politicians tell you that the terrorist attacks we have seen have nothing to do with religion, the facts simply expose them as liars. The media reporting concerning a young Muslim who last year shot and killed a police accountant in Parramatta in Western Sydney made no mention of his religious affiliation in spite of the fact that he was heard yelling 'Allahu Akbar' as he waved the offending firearm in the air. The evening television news made great efforts to downplay any 'religious' motives back of this tragedy.

Again, in 2015, self proclaimed ISIS terrorists callously murdered 130 people, 89 at a rock concert (the rest at mainly Jewish sites), and the global media rushed to explain that the perpetrators were 'extremists' who simply hijacked a religion of peace and were not associated with 'peaceful' Islam.

At the concert venue the band 'Eagles of Metal Death' were playing and the lyrics were expressing worship to Satan himself. The killing spree began at the moment the band and the patrons were mouthing the words of the song 'kiss the devil', which included: 'I'll love the devil, I'll sing his song'. Many would have experienced that sooner than expected? One of the attackers was heard to say 'god is great' as he sprayed the audience with machine gun bullets.

The media simply refused to print the reasons given by these killers for their murderous rampage. Here are excerpts from their statement - and they are purely 'religious': *'In the Name of Allah...In a blessed battle...enabled by Allah, a group of believers...set out targeting the capital of prostitution and vice, the lead carrier of the cross in Europe - Paris. This group of believers were youth who divorced the worldly life and advanced towards their enemy hoping to be killed for Allah's sake, doing so in support of His religion, His Prophet (blessing and peace be upon him), and His allies...Thus, they were truthful with Allah...and Allah granted victory upon their hands and cast terror into the hearts of the crusaders'*.

These deranged killers see all Christians as 'Crusaders' and decry all of western civilisation as decadent and immoral. The lands recaptured from Islam throughout history are deemed to remain eternally Islamic and any action to bring about their subjugation once again is deemed a holy action - no matter

any act of faith or obedience. It does not say here that God foreknew that any would believe and therefore that's why He chose them apart from any predestination or election. Yet that notion is wrongly 'read' into the text by many. If one reads to verse 20 the same Greek derivative translated 'foreknowledge' is used and yet translated 'foreordained' in many translations. Thus the two words 'foreordained' and 'foreknown' are inseparable. Foremost Greek scholar, Spiros Zodhiates, said of this foreknowledge, that it is *'used of events, to previously decide or plan; to foreknow for God is to foreordain; 1Peter 1:19,20 presents Christ as the 'Lamb of God foreknown from the foundation of the world'*.

4. Yes, *'all the elect will actually receive God's salvation'*. The elect can arguably 'resist' for a time but John ch.6 confirms they *will* be saved: *'All that the Father gives me SHALL come to me; and him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out....all which he has given me I should lose nothing...I WILL raise him up at the last day...No man can come to me, except the Father which has sent me draw him: and I WILL raise him up at the last day'* (vs.37-44).

5. Those who do not believe and therefore are not *'one of the elect'* will have no excuse by the law (Rom.ch.1-3:). *'All have sinned'*. They will be judged *for their sins* which they freely committed by nature.

6. The concept of *'Limited Atonement'* is not mentioned or laid out theologically in the Bible. The best that can be adduced is that the blood of Jesus is *sufficient* for all humans to be saved; but it will in the end be *effective* for, or 'applied', only to some, considering 'few' will ultimately be saved (Matt.7:14; Jn.10:11-15; Heb.10:14; Matt.20:28; 1Cor.15:22; Matt.1:21; Rev.5:9,10). Some do refer to the scriptures that teach that Jesus as the 'shepherd' lays his life down for the 'sheep' (Jn.10:11-15) and that the *'offering'* is for *'them that are sanctified'* (Heb.10:14). 2Corinthians 5:19 is also worth considering - Christ reconciles the *'world'* which is then described as *'them'* who do not have their *'sins imputed to them'*.

Diakrisis TV - YouTube

The 'Diakrisis TV' U-tube...Excellent teaching...keep up the good work... (C.K. S.A.)

Editor's note: The 'Diakrisis TV' series is a 4 part series of short Gospel messages. These have now been uploaded to U-tube. The titles are: 1. *What is the Gospel?* 2. *The Heart of the Gospel* 3. *Which gospel* 4. *Another gospel*. Each present the Gospel and teach on an aspect of the Gospel

Your Comments and Questions

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Questions From an Arminian Viewpoint

1. Do you preach election to the unsaved in a Gospel meeting and in personal witness?
2. Please explain the difference between the foreknowledge of God and his Omniscience.
3. Please give help on 1Peter 1:2 which indicates to me I was elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit.
4. Do all the elect actually receive God's salvation or do some still refuse to come? If all come, did they come by faith?
5. Do those who were not one of the elect have an excuse when they stand at the Great White Throne Judgement?
6. I do not believe in limited atonement, so do you teach that GOD poured out the cup of his wrath upon his son for the elect only?
7. Please give help on 1Timothy 2:1-6 ...who would have ALL men to be saved (vs 4)...who gave himself a ransom for ALL (vs 6).

Editor's reply:

1. No. When Paul was preaching election and predestination, he was teaching *believers*. We do not preach 'election' to the unsaved or in a Gospel meeting, the same as we do not preach many other aspects of theology. Only the Gospel saves. But when they are saved they will be blessed if they accept the word of God - that election is taught in the OT (Dt.7:6-8; Is.45:4); and the NT consistently speaks of the elect or 'chosen' ('*eklégo*') saints (Rom.16:13; 1Pet.1:1,2; 2Jn.1:1,13). Other passages speak of our sovereign election '*before the foundation of the world*' (Eph.1:4-11; Rom.9:11,15,16).

2. Biblically, God's foreknowledge is knowledge accompanied by a decree, such as in Acts 2:23: '*Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*'. This term 'foreknow' is used for matters which God deliberately chose and predestinated. In 1Peter 1:19,20 Christ is the Lamb of God '*foreordained before the foundation of the world*'. The word '*foreordained*' here is literally the word for '*foreknown*' ('*proginosko*') and is translated as such in different translations. God had planned and decreed to provide His Son as a sacrifice for His people. He foresees because it is ordained by Him to happen according to His sovereign plans. '*Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world*' (Acts 15:18).

His 'Omniscience' is God's *attribute* of being *all knowing*.

3. 1Peter 1:2: Election here precedes the working of the Holy Spirit in

what carnage ensues.

The media only report what is politically correct at the time, and is charged with lulling the populace into a false sense of calm and security. If these killers are merely a fringe element of society and in no way represent a broader sense of religious duty imposed on a populace by holy writ, then there is simply nothing to be concerned about - and the powers-that-be will take care of that and ensure our safety and wellbeing.

And that is just the point here. Every time a terrorist event occurs - the media extrapolate it out to include the entire populace and instil a collective guilt that we have in some way brought about conditions in our society that has frustrated a certain group to the point where they feel the need to rebel - and to use their 'religious' beliefs to excuse their actions.

And each and every time this occurs legislation always seems to be at the ready to further constrict our freedoms - freedoms given constitutionally and Biblically. The media, now owned globally by just a handful of powerful people, report such events as though those that kill and maim are in no way motivated by their 'faith' in their 'god'. That mere societal pressures have brought this about. It is 'political correctness' gone mad.

It is now taboo to connect religious ideologies to terrorist acts. The 'War on Terror' apparently has nothing much to do with religion, in particular Islam? Yet read the statements by ISIS and other terrorist groups and the same message is coming through - they hate so-called western decadence and Christianity. The Koran is consistently and often cited. They see the secularisation of society and Christianity as one and the same animal. Of course the stench in all this is that they choose to solve this religious conflict by more than the immorality they disdain - they do so with ruthless cold-blooded murder.

The hypocrisy in all of this is that politicians and governments have worked so hard to marginalise and even denigrate Christianity. Do we consider it may well be that God is handing society over to its own evil desires? We have laughed at God's marriage laws, overturned the sanctity of life, scorned the concept of family, and watched as if helpless, our leaders endorse those practices that God says he abhors. A sincere Christian can barely watch the mainstream media today without outrage at the lies, spin, and lack of vital information being presented as 'news'. The hostility toward Christianity and anything Biblical is palpable - and the generosity and appeasement shown toward anti-Christian religion is almost beyond belief.

Yet, this is all unfolding just as the Jewish prophets of old have revealed. That as the world applauded plans to do away with the God of creation - to uphold and promote spiritual abominations - God would simply hold them in derision - and as the world at large refuses to see or report - the final syncretic world religion is coming in to view that no one dare criticise without severe penalty...to even mention it is to now invite the ire of the world at large.

Terry Arnold & Mike Claydon

Pope Says 'We Are All Children of God'



Vatican City, Jan. 7, 2016: The Pope's first-ever video message on his monthly prayer intentions...highlighted the importance of interreligious dialogue and...different faith traditions...

The Pope said: 'Many think differently, feel differently, seeking God, meeting God in different ways. In this crowd, this range of religions, there is only one certainty...we are all children of God'.

...The video goes on to feature representatives of Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Judaism, who proclaim their respective beliefs in God, Jesus Christ, Allah and Buddha. The Pope affirms that all, regardless of their religious profession, are children of God...

Pope Francis...expressed his hope that viewers 'will spread my prayer request this month: that sincere dialogue among men and women of different faiths may produce fruits of peace and justice...'.
(Apostasy Alert, 05 Jan. 2016)

Editor's comments: This revealing 1.5 minute video can be seen at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-6FfTxwTX34&feature=youtu>

If we are all 'children of God' then the Bible is in error when it states there is only *one way* to God - through Jesus Christ and his sacrifice (Acts 4:12; Jn.14:6; Eph.1:7; Col.1:14). The prophesied endtime ecumenical church is already here. The Roman church is a key player in this system which the antichrist will control and Christ will destroy (Rev.17:1-18:4).

World Council of Churches Presents 'Ten Commandments' of Food

On 21st January at a World Economic Forum session on how food choices become a catalyst for positive change, the World Council of Churches General Secretary, Rev. Dr Olav Tveit presented 'Ten Commandments' of food to business and political leaders. 'If we view food through the lens of justice, every plate of food reminds us of certain challenges and opportunities. It is important we acknowledge the efforts, investments and very lives of living plants and creatures sacrificed to provide food on our tables'.

Tveit's ten commandments of food are: 1. You shall give thanks for the food...2. Provide food for those who have no food. 3...eat mindfully and in moderation. 4...be grateful to those who grow and prepare food...5...not waste 6...reduce the ecological footprint of food production and supply. 7...protect the biodiversity of the sources of food. 8...support fair wages for farmers 9...strive for all people to have access to affordable and nutritious food. 10...rejoice and share the sacred gift of food with all.

Editor's Comment: Which gospel is this?

Your Comments and Questions

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Terry, did the original Greek have punctuation marks? Questions arise with Luke 23:43. Some cult groups change the position of the comma?

(G.J., Qld)

Editor's reply: The original parchments/manuscripts of Greek had no punctuation marks and no spaces between words. Copies of original fragments and ancient inscriptions show what would look like a jumble of letters to the untrained eye. However, this was no real problem to a reader in Greek, especially if it was their native language. The punctuation marks and spaces were added centuries later in copies of the NT Greek which we have today. Greek Scholars would largely agree on the punctuation marks. The Greek copies we have now do have punctuation marks and spaces and these are the texts we work from to translate. The Greek full stop and comma is the same as in English. The Greek question mark is: ';' (like an English semi-Colon). (When translating Greek one might not at first take much notice of punctuation marks in the Greek text as the structure of the sentence often has to be re-arranged to read in English grammar).

In regard to Lk.23:43 'And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto you, Today shall you be with me in paradise'. The Greek for this is literally (with Greek punctuation marks and capitals): 'And said to [him] the Jesus, 'Amen I say to you, today with me you [will/shall be] in the paradise'. Cult groups change this, as do some Word Faith teachers like Joyce Meyer, who has stated: 'I say unto you today comma. I'm telling you today. Today I'm telling you that you are going to be in paradise with me.' But he didn't say, 'You're going to be there today.' He said, 'I'm telling you today.' (1) While Meyer has denied a comma in one place she has conveniently put a comma in another place. This is exactly what the cults and others do who teach 'soul sleep', (that a Christian on death does not go immediately to be with the Lord (see 2Cor.5:6-8; Phil.1:21-23). The phrase 'I say unto you' ('amen soi lego') is used elsewhere 74 times in the Gospels alone. In 73 places the Jehovah Witness Bible (*New World Translation*) puts a break - a comma - immediately after the phrase, 'I say unto you'. However, Luke 23:43 is their *only exception!* Why? - because it goes against the *Watchtowers* (JW) teaching. Similarly with Meyer's Word-Faith heresy of a Jesus in hell paying for our sins - the comma is misplaced to fit her teaching. However, standard Greek scholarship has always recognised that the immediate context demands the comma to be placed *after* 'you', as is shown in *every other case*.

(1) Sermon - 'From the Cross to the Throne' - Joyce Meyer

Your Comments and Questions

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Terry, What makes a prophet true? What makes a prophet false? I need some verses and exposition of these verses. I was talking with Seventh Day Adventists (SDA), and I made the comment that God's true prophets were accurate 100% of the time. They wanted verses. Changing subjects, have you ever noticed if there is an unusually high divorce rate in the SDA church?

...In discussions with Adventists about the Law in the New Testament, they say the completion of the law is referring to the 'ceremonial law' which is different to the 10 commandments...and we are no longer under the ceremonial law but we are under the 10 commandments?

(J.W., USA)

Editor's reply: The *office* of prophets ended with the end of revelation. The prophets and apostles were the 'foundation' of the church (Eph.2:20). Hebrews 1:1,2 states that this revelation from the 'prophets' is 'past'. This was also the unanimous consensus of the early church Fathers. Added revelation cannot be done today without inviting a 'curse' from God for adding to the revelation 'once delivered to the saints' (Jude 3). I agree people might 'prophesy' today in giving forth revelation we have in the Bible in preaching, praying, etc. But the *office* of prophet is closed as is the canon of scripture.

A 'false prophet' is simply one who makes a prophecy and it does not come to pass. Deut. ch.13 and ch.18 detail this and the result.

Ellen G. White, 'prophetess' of the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) religion, was a false prophet. Our website has a list of her numerous false prophecies. *It only takes ONE false prophecy to make a false prophet!*

Some studies have been done on alcoholism, divorce, etc. in various cult groups. But the most dangerous death cults have stemmed from people who were once involved in SDA or had the same ideas originally (eg. David Koresh, Waco Texas massacre). The problem is the bondage to a system of laws to bring about and keep salvation, and then the person becomes a 'law unto themselves' - exactly what Ellen G. White became to the SDA.

In regard to what the 'Law' is. Why is it that Adventists decide which of the 600+ Jewish Laws they intend to keep or discard? Nine out of the ten commandments are repeated in the NT and obviously a moral obligation. But if we could keep the 10 Commandments then why have Jesus? God says we have all broken the Law. Only Christ kept it fully to be accepted by God. The Jerusalem Council set out clearly the legal requirements of a Gentile Christian (Acts 15). God will not save anyone by the law or the keeping of it (Rom.3:20; 2:12; Acts 13:39; Gal.3:11). We are not under the law of Moses but under the law of Christ (Gal.6:2; 1Cor.9:21).

The Apostasy Grows - Southern Baptist LGBT



'In a highly-ironic twist, the First Baptist Church of Greenville, SC, the same church that produced the very first president of the Southern Baptist Convention, William Johnson, is now an LGBT [Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender] affirming, pro-same sex marriage, and pro-transgender church...

Greenville...in its earliest years served as a birthplace for revered Southern Baptist institutions...whose founder more than a century and a half ago served as the inaugural president of the Southern Baptist Convention...

'We need to do the right thing, regardless of what anybody thinks or says about us', says Jim Dant, the 84-year-old church's senior minister... 'In some ways, it's going to open up a space for evangelical gay people to have a place again', he says. 'There will be a voice of biblical interpretation in the evangelical world that says the way this has been interpreted by the average preacher every Sunday is not the only way that evangelicals read biblical literature.'

...The Mississippi Conservative Daily writes of a war brewing within the Southern Baptist Convention that threatens to split it right down the middle...

...If Revelation 3:20 is right, eventually they [Southern Baptists] will fall as well. When I visited the church's website, I was not able to find a Statement of Faith regarding their doctrinal beliefs...this is what the 'falling away' the apostle Paul warned us about looks like. It's end times prophecy coming true...'
(NTEB Newsdesk, Jan.02/2016; cited in *Apostasy Alert*, Jan/2016)

Editor's Comment: 'Apostasy' means to turn around and teach the opposite to what was taught. How is it that *'the voice of biblical interpretation...by the average preacher...is not the only way that evangelicals read biblical literature'*? How is it that orthodox Christianity, commentators and 'interpretations' for nearly 2,000 years have had in the main a unanimous understanding that the 'gay' lifestyle was unbiblical? What is difficult about verses that clearly warn of 'same sex' activities? (Lev.18:22; Rom.1:26,27; Jude 7; 1Cor.6:9,10). You do not need a theological degree or exegesis to understand what the Bible says concerning LGBT! At the root of this is a low view of the Word of God as being inspired and all sufficient.

A note on the 'slippery slope' of 'discrimination: Many have ridiculed Christians for their warnings of the impending 'slippery slope' of attacks on religious freedom from the same sex marriage agenda. But the warning is already proving true. The Catholic bishop of Tasmania is being taken to the courts for issuing a pamphlet teaching his people to stand for marriage between a man and a woman. Pro marriage television adverts have already been refused by some TV stations and newspapers. Pastors have been warned about producing Bible teaching about marriage. It may well be that one day the Bible itself is banned?

Prosperity Preachers Defend Using Private Jets to Avoid ‘Demons’?



Prosperity preachers Kenneth Copeland and Jesse Duplantis defended their ownership of private jets...stating they couldn't accommodate their schedule any other way and wouldn't want to ride commercial with a 'bunch of demons'.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AdH2DGSXjss&feature=youtu>

The discussion was aired on...Copeland's 'Believer's Voice of Victory' as Duplantis shared a story of how God told him on a flight home that his faith was 'stagnating'. 'As I was going home, the Lord - real quickly - He said, 'Jesse, do you like your plane? I thought, 'That's an odd statement'. 'Well, certainly, Lord. He said, 'Do you really like it?' And I thought, 'Well, yes, Lord.' And He said, 'So that's it...You gonna let your faith stagnate?' Duplantis said that he then unbuckled his seatbelt, stood up and said, 'Lord, I don't think I'm letting my faith stagnate', but God responded, 'So, this is all I could ever do?'

Copeland then chimed in and explained that...Oral Roberts...used to fly airlines...people [were] coming up to him,...wanting him to pray for them...You can't manage that today [in] this dope-filled world, and get in a long tube with a bunch of demons. And it's deadly'.

...In 2015, prosperity preacher Creflo Dollar...generated controversy in his effort to raise \$65 million dollars to purchase a private jet...Dollar had asked for 200,000 people to donate \$300 dollars each so that he could purchase a new G650 airplane. The Gulfstream G650 is a top-end business jet that can carry up to 18 passengers and is stated to fly faster than other large cabin aircraft...Some expressed dismay as to why Dollar, who leads a 30,000-member megachurch and lives in a million dollar home, needs such an expensive aircraft, which is reportedly sought out by billionaires...

(Apostasy Alert, 03 Jan.2016)

Editor's comment: The 'God told me' doctrine here as well as the manner, is nothing short of blasphemous. It is also extra biblical, further words from God, and are cursed (Rev.22:18,19; Gal.1:8,9). See our article 'The doctrine of God Told me': <http://taministries.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/The-Doctrine-of-God-Told-Me-v3.00.pdf>

These men 'through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you...their damnation slumbers not...[they] speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption...Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you...beguiling unstable souls...with covetous practices...These are wells without water...to whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever...they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness...they themselves are the servants of corruption...' (2Pet.2:3-19).

Assessment: Only one verse is ever used for this modern concept - Revelation 3:20 - '**Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me**'

Yet this scripture has absolutely nothing to do with unsaved people, but rather to an apostate Laodicean church of believers!

4. Those who never hear the Gospel will be saved by the 'revelation'/ 'light' they were/are given.

Assessment: Will the unreached Amazonian Indians who never heard of Jesus or the Gospel still go to Heaven? What does the Bible say? '**...when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power**' (2Thess.1:7-9). The Amazonian Indians and all who have never heard of Christ or the Gospel are not in Heaven by any 'light' they were given. They are justly and already condemned because they are sinners with sin natures and '**know not God**' (vs.9). No one comes to salvation except through Jesus and his Gospel (Jn.14:16). Those who do not believe are '**condemned already**' (Jn.3:18). There is no other way to be saved (Acts 4:12). Not one scripture teaches people will be saved '**by the light they were given**'. Rather, Romans chapter 1 actually says they will be damned and have '**no excuse**' for not believing in a creator.

Is this your God? *This is the true God of the Bible!*

The danger in today's Christianity is that we mould God into a deity that fits with our mind's sentiment. It becomes more and more an image of ME. Is it any wonder we have so many different 'gospels' today?

God has a righteous anger upon sin and the sinner. Jesus is a judge to be fearful of. He is the one who executes judgement. He is sovereign in the salvation of men. He is not a god with his 'hands tied' by any 'free will' of man.

What God wants all men to hear is that God commands all to repent and believe in His Christ. When we are saved, the image and perception we have of who God is and what he is like must be shaped by scripture alone. God is a God of love but he is also a God of judgement and justice. He deems it fit to punish sin one way or the other - *either upon his son Jesus on the cross, or in an eternal Hell.*

Surely one of Satan's chief weapons today is to change the truth of who God really is. The world's postmodern thinking and sentiment will surely play into the Devil's hands in this regard.

Which 'God' do you have?

Terry Arnold

free will...that inherent ability to choose salvation.

Assessment: Not a single scripture states ‘*God wants everyone to be saved*’. Only two scriptures are often misquoted for this...

‘The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to US-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance’ (2Pet.3:9).

This first scripture is specifically written to the ‘*usward*’ - the ‘*beloved*’, mentioned repeatedly throughout the passage (vs.1,8,14,17). The *context* is also about the end of this age and the sureness of the Lord’s coming *for his ‘beloved’*.

The second scripture is: **‘I exhort...prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty...Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth’** (1Tim.2:3,4).

Often only verse 4 is quoted out of context. By the phrase ‘*who will have all men to be saved*’ it is often assumed to mean God wants everyone everywhere to be saved. However, the context is *prayer*, and not prayer for everyone everywhere. The prayers here are limited to ‘*all men*’ in verse 1 which is defined in verse 2 as - ‘*kings, and for all that are in authority*’. The context is Paul urging prayers for a peculiar class of people - so that ‘*we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty*’. There is also an historical context to consider. Paul is writing to Timothy in Ephesus and these ‘*kings*’ and those ‘*in authority*’ include *Gentiles*. Paul then mentions in verse 7 his mission to them: **‘Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity’** (vs.7). The first use of ‘*all men*’ (vs.4) refers to various social classes; the second use of ‘*all men*’ (vs.6) refers to the *Gentiles* being included in salvation.

Both these scriptures are often used without also interpreting the many scriptures which clearly state God is the ‘*author and the finisher*’ of faith, that he himself chooses, elects, predestinates, justifies and saves.

Is Jesus really being held back in ‘*waiting for our ‘free will’*’. Is he so impotent? Do we, in our unsaved state, have any ability within ourselves to choose salvation, when the scriptures state the opposite - that we were unable to be subject to God’s law; we were by nature ‘*dead in sin*’; and that we cannot come unless ‘*drawn*’ and our hearts be ‘*opened*’ (Rom.8:7,8; Eph.2:2-5; 1Cor.2:14; Jn.6:44; Acts 16:14)?

3. *God is knocking at the door of a man’s heart waiting for them to open the door so he can come into their hearts in salvation. He is pleading with people to be saved.*

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The Gospel Cheapened **A Review of ‘The Unopened Gift’ by Our Daily Bread**

We have been using the *Our Daily Bread* booklets for years now and have found them to contain interesting illustrations and some worthy Biblical devotions. This past Christmas pastors and churches were offered a tract by Our Daily Bread (ODB) titled: ‘*The Unopened Gift - Why Not Take a Look?*’ by Leslie Koh: <http://ourdailybread.org/resources/the-unopened-gift/>

When it comes to Gospel presentations, we make no apologies for ruthlessly scrutinising the texts in the tracts available today. To our dismay most tracts and so-called Gospel presentations that we reviewed offered anything but a Biblical Gospel! It is imperative that great discernment must be applied when producing writings that purport to present the Christian Gospel. The Gospel cannot be minimised, cheapened or changed in any way. It has to be biblically accurate. This is not *our* Gospel, it’s God’s and Christ’s Gospel (2Cor.2:12; Rom.1:9). We have been commanded to adhere to it in its fullness, deliver it to all that would hear, and never for one minute dilute it to make it more palatable.

The ‘*Unopened Gift*’ tract by ODB is a typical example of just how the Gospel is cheapened and minimised today. (For space, we are not able to print every line of the tract but the context has been carefully represented. Our assessment in **bold**)

‘Christmas wouldn’t be the same without the gifts... [An introduction speaks of shopping, unwrapping gifts, Christmas trees, etc...] Sometimes, you almost know what to expect...chocolates or cookies...But there are also times when there’s a nice surprise...something handmade with the greatest love, from someone dearest to you...Under a Christmas tree...the biggest and prettiest get the most attention...they appear to promise more...’

Every Christmas, however, there remains one gift that many people don’t open. People either miss it or forget it’s there, possibly because it isn’t ‘glitzy’ like all the other presents. Yet this present could be the best of them all. It’s made just for you, and it’s been given by someone who knows exactly what you want and need. It’s always been there, waiting for you. And the good news is, after opening it up and taking a look inside, you don’t even have to accept it. You can still think it through...’

[You ‘don’t have to accept’ the Gospel and Christ? You can ‘think it through’? Where is this concept in scripture? Salvation is wrought by the Sovereign Lord of Glory!]

‘What’s inside the Box? Unlike the usual...this gift is custom-made, and it possesses some very special qualities. It’s a gift beyond your wildest dreams’

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[The Gospel is ‘*custom made...beyond your wildest dreams*’? Actually, to the unsaved person this ‘gift’ is utter ‘*foolishness*’ as are the ‘*things of the Spirit*’ (1Cor.1:18; 2:14)]

‘Imagine a man who was born blind receiving the gift of sight...Or a social outcast who finds a good friend or spouse that he can spend his life with. That’s what this surprise gift is about: it exceeds your highest expectations and it meets your deepest, innermost needs’.

[The Gospel and the receiving of Christ as Saviour is not about meeting our ‘*deepest, innermost needs*’! This sets the person up for a false conversion! ‘*Felt needs*’ may be the fruit of the gospel in Sanctification, but it is not the Gospel of Justification and forgiveness. The Gospel, when received, will deliver us from sin and its consequences before an offended God who is at enmity with the sinner (Rom.8:7; Eph.2:15,16)]

‘It’s a gift of enduring hope. Perhaps you feel trapped by an addiction to drugs or alcohol, fear of illness, worries over a crippling mortgage, or the stress of a difficult job. Whatever the challenges you face in life, and no matter how bad things appear, this gift offers you hope: the comfort that something can be done, the assurance that someone absolutely dependable is walking alongside, giving you the strength to face the darkest, most dangerous times in your life’

[The Gospel is not for ‘*something to be done*’ about ‘*addictions*’ and ‘*stresses*’ of life. It is not just about ‘*strength*’ to face ‘*your life*’. It’s about denying and giving away your life! (Matt.16:24-26). Again, fixing our life’s problems is what the Holy Spirit might do in Sanctification. But this is not the Gospel of what Christ has done on our behalf. The Gospel is not an improvement of our life here - but about Christ and his death for us]

‘It’s a gift of a fresh start. Perhaps you have made mistakes in life...and you regret your actions...No matter what you’ve done, this gift offers you a fresh start: forgiveness and the assurance that you can move on and live a life of integrity and character, freed from old guilt and shame’.

[Salvation is not just a ‘*fresh start*’. It is a *new life, a new creation* (2Cor.5:17). We do not ‘*regret*’ our actions to receive Christ but rather we must *repent* of our sins! Regret is not required, repentance is? Scripturally, our ‘*regrets*’ are actually revealed as merely the ‘*sorrow of the world*’ - 2Cor.7:8-10 – Therefore the words ‘*regret*’ and ‘*repent*’ are opposed to one another! When we receive ‘*forgiveness and assurance*’ we do not just ‘*move on and live a life*’. This is arguably cheap language to describe what the shed blood of Christ has achieved on our behalf. Christ did not die to

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evangelicism. In contrast, the scriptures break the mould of the ‘god of love’ that many preach today. ‘*God is angry with the wicked everyday*’ (Ps.7:11); He hates the ‘*wicked*’ and ‘*those who do violence*’ (Ps 11:5).

Is this your God? *This is the true God of the Bible!*

Do we mould God into what we want? Has he become a god of ‘love’ and not of wrath; a god of love and not of justice?

2. *Jesus does not judge anyone. Jesus could never send anyone to Hell. People go to Hell of their own free choice...*

Assessment: This is a popular sentiment today. But what do the scriptures say?: ‘*For the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment unto the Son*’ (Jn.5:22). It is Jesus who will ‘*judge the quick and the dead*’ (Acts 10:42). The wicked will be cast into the furnace of fire, where there is ‘*wailing and gnashing of teeth*’ (Matt.13:42). It is also Jesus Himself who consigns people to Hell who are even *professing Christians* but lacking repentance, who do not ‘*know*’ him, having not been born from above (Matt.7:23).

God created Hell originally for the angels *knowing* it would be a place of punishment for all unrepentant sinners and *knowing* Hell would be an eternal monument to his wrath against sin. ‘*He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him*’ (Jn.3:36).

Is your God a God of this ‘wrath’ and judgement? *This is the true God of the Bible!*

Do ‘*people go to Hell of their own free choice*’? Logic defies this - Who in their right mind would choose Hell! Who would *choose* to enter an eternity of flaming torment over an eternity in heavenly bliss! Some would reply: ‘*People go to Hell when they refuse to accept Jesus*’. But logic again defies this - Do they simply accept their fate and *willingly* walk into a fiery furnace?

Romans chapter 9 is a passage rejected by many for its hard truths on the wrath and judgement of God. It teaches God is sovereign in whom he elects and that his holy attributes of justice and wrath will forever be on display in the Lake that burns with fire. ‘*Therefore has he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardens...Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why have you made me thus? Has not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory*’ (Rom.9:18-23).

3. *God wants everyone to be saved. Jesus is waiting to save everyone but man’s free will is holding Him back. God is waiting for man to use his*

Which 'God' Do You Have?

Is it possible to create a false image of God? We all have a perception of who God is. But today it is evident that the image we often create of what God is like and how he thinks, is extra biblical. Here are some popular examples:

1. *God is Love. He loves everyone. He is not angry with the sinner. He loves the sinner...He loves the homosexual...*

Assessment: 'God is love' is mentioned twice in 1John 4:7-17. The context is God's sacrificial love ('*agapeo*') given to *believers* - the 'us', the 'we', the 'beloved', the 'born of God'. This particular '*agapeo*' love is given *only* to believers upon salvation. This love came about due to '*propitiation*' (vs.10) - Jesus satisfying the demands of God with a sacrifice.

But because 'God is love', does this mean that He also 'loves the sinner' and 'loves the homosexual'? There is no scripture that says '*God loves the sinner and hates the sin*'. That slogan is a modern invention. When God's love is spoken of, it invariably refers to His believers.

Some might quote John 3:16: '*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*'. If the 'world' here is everyone then it has to be at least discerned that God does not love everyone in the same way He loves his believers. Certainly God loves his creation, since he made it *without sin*. And the '*whosoever believes*' here is not anyone but literally '*all the believing ones*' ('*pas o pistueon*') which matches perfectly the context of the passage. The verses either side of verse 16 also speak of *judgement*: '*He that believes on him is not condemned: but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God*' (vs.18).

If God loves the sinner then the question to be asked is 'what kind of love is this' - when he destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah; when he once commanded people to be stoned for homosexuality; when at times commanded whole cities, families and children to be slaughtered (Josh.ch.6,7,8). Did He love the Canaanites who were not given any opportunity to repent before being slaughtered by Joshua? Why does he (in the New Testament) state that certain sinners (eg. 'fornicators') will not enter the kingdom of Heaven and will endure eternal torment and punishment with fire (Eph.5:5,6)?

What kind of 'love' does God have for the unsaved sinner when scripture teaches God has anger ('wrath') upon every unsaved person and calls them '*children of wrath*' (Eph.2:2,3). '*Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things come the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience*' (Eph.5:6).

'*God is a God of love and not of hate*' is the fruit of sentimental modern

provide '*your best life now*'].

'It's a gift of true satisfaction. A successful career...home...popular acclaim - can any of these things bring lasting satisfaction?...So what's next? What is life really all about? Why am I here? Imagine a gift that can answer such questions and provide a proper perspective on things - that gives you a new sense of purpose and mission and shows you what is really worth living for'.

[The purpose of salvation and the receiving of Christ is not to have a '*proper perspective...a new sense of purpose and mission*' to '*show you what is really worth living for*'. Again the possible fruit of the Gospel through Sanctification has been confused with the Gospel itself - that God can justify the sinner because of the substitutionary work of Christ. The Gospel is not about the benefits for us, but Christ's satisfaction?]

'It's a gift that money can't buy. Some gifts are priceless - a good relationship with a loved one...the presence of a good friend in times of need. You may...yearn for these things that money cannot buy. Relationships, reconciliation and companionship - all these can bring great joy and peace and make life worth living. So too can this special Christmas gift. It can't be bought at a store, yet it brings more happiness than anything a shop has to offer'.

[Christ and the Gospel in this tract are constantly being presented merely as 'superior' to things in the world? The Gospel is not for the purposes of '*bringing more happiness than anything a shop has to offer*'? This entices the reader to equate the 'gift' as an offer marginally better than the '*priceless gifts*' of the world]

'It's a gift from someone special...The giver can make all the difference...this special gift: it's from someone who knows you and loves you deeply, and wants only the best for you'

[This is a false 'love' gospel which detracts from the Gospel that tells the unsaved they are sinners under judgement. The Bible simply does not say that God '*loves deeply*' the sinner and '*only wants the best*' for them. 'God is love' (1Jn.4:8,16) does not mean that He also '*loves deeply the sinner*'. The God of the Bible destroyed the sinners in Sodom and Gomorrah. He commanded people to be stoned for homosexuality in the Old Testament and stated he is 'angry with the sinner' (Ps.7:11;11:5). In Romans chapter 9 he speaks of his justice and wrath being forever on display in the Lake that burns with fire and sulphur.

In the New Testament he gives a list of sinners who will not enter the kingdom of Heaven and will endure eternal fire. In the oft recited passage

of John 3:16 ‘*God so loved the world...*’ the verses either side speak of judgement and condemnation. The Bible does not paint the picture that is painted of God in this tract. The sinner must understand he is indeed a sinner by nature and cannot pay the price for forgiveness of his sin]

‘...you might be thinking: This sounds like a great gift. Only it can’t possibly exist. No Christmas gift could do all that. It sounds too good to be true. But here’s the real Christmas surprise: such a gift really does exist, and it has been there all this time. It’s a present you can open anytime...We invite you to take a look inside, and consider accepting it...’

[It is too ‘good’ to be true! The ‘gift’ here is packaged to suit the carnal mind and a false understanding of the Gospel and of Christ. The Gospel and Christ are not a ‘*present you can open anytime*’. Salvation is not so cheap as to be just ‘*opened any time*’ on human volition (2Cor.6:2; Jn.1:12,13)]

‘This gift, however, doesn’t really come in a box, but in the form of a person - a very special person...Jesus came to show us the way to God, our Creator...and how we can best fulfil His purpose for us and live life to the fullest. Through Jesus, we will come to know who our Creator is and experience the wonderful blessings He offers to us: the fulfillment of our deepest needs; enduring hope in desperate times; a fresh opportunity to live a life of integrity; true satisfaction, meaning, and direction in life; priceless joy and peace; and deep, unconditional love. The best part of this Christmas gift is that we don’t need to have been ‘good’ to receive it, unlike Santa’s presents. It is simply there for us to open and accept.

Why not take a look? Is this the gift you have been looking for?...You can tell God, your Creator, anytime ‘Yes, I accept this gift. I want everything you offer’.

[Again, the purpose of the Gospel or receiving Jesus is NOT to ‘*best fulfil His purpose for us and live life to the fullest*’. Nor is it about ‘*us, our deepest need, our life, integrity, satisfaction, direction in this life...*’ It is rather about Christ, his life and the Father’s satisfaction (‘propitiation’).

And yes we cannot be ‘good’, for no one is ‘good’ but God (Matt.19:17). But where is the statement that we have all fallen short of the glory of God and are in desperate need of salvation? We do not ‘open’ this gift. It is rather given to us by Grace through faith, not of works or anything ‘of ourselves’ (Eph.2:8,9)]

‘Or perhaps you’re interested in what this gift promises, but you’re not too sure if you really want to accept it. Maybe you’re worried about what would happen if you do. That’s fine too. But why not find out a little more about this gift, and see if it’s worth considering? Take a closer look at what this present

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has to offer, and discover for yourself if it is able to satisfy your deepest desires and your greatest needs...’

['Maybe you’re worried about what would happen if you do...That’s fine too’? Is this a message of true repentance? No it’s NOT ‘fine’! The ‘gift’ cannot be trivialised in such a way! Again, the Gospel is not primarily designed to ‘satisfy your deepest desires and your greatest needs...’

Conclusion: Some might argue this tract is only an ‘ice breaker’ to the Gospel. However, it still is referring to the Gospel, the ‘gift’ and Christ. It sets the reader up to be a *shopper* of a gift that might just be better than what they have in the world? The ‘gift’ and the person of Christ are trivialised, minimised and made out to be like a genie who might deliver satisfaction and fulfil ‘needs’. This is not the message of the true Gospel.

Nowhere is sin, the cross, the death, burial and the resurrection of Christ mentioned. The whole tract is framed in negotiable language so foreign to the Gospel and scripture - which teaches we are sinners having broken God’s law and in need of Christ the Saviour, whose sacrifice has satisfied God on our behalf.

The ‘prince of preachers’, Charles Spurgeon, foresaw and decried the rise of a modern gospel that would minimise the truth of sin and judgement - one that tickles ears. He wrote:

‘There are many points and particulars in which the gospel is offensive to human nature, and revolting to the pride of the creature. It was not intended to please man. How can we attribute such a purpose to God? Why should He devise a gospel to suit the whim of our poor fallen human nature? He intended to save men, but he never intended to gratify their depraved tastes’.

‘Do men really believe that there is a gospel for each century? Or a religion for each fifty years? Will there be in heaven saints saved according to a score sorts of gospel? Will these agree together to sing the same song? And what will the song be? Saved on different footings, and believing different doctrines, will they enjoy eternal concord, or will Heaven itself be only a new arena for disputation between varieties of faiths?’.

‘If we felt at liberty to leave out something, we should naturally omit that which is offensive, and away would go the tooth and edge of the gospel. That which is offensive in the gospel is just that which is effective. What men oppose is what God uses’.

Bring the Gospel back!

Terry Arnold & Mike Claydon